

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	Birthright of Alexandria
Location/Address	1114 Broadway, Alexandria MN 56308
Date and Location of Site Visit	Tuesday, October 25, 2016 1114 Broadway, Alexandria MN 56308
Grantee Participants	Tammy Lenz, Director Julie Desautels, Treasurer
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman, Positive Alternatives Grant Manager
Grant Agreement #/PO #	52999/PO3000022257

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current?

Yes

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes

3. Where is this central file located?

Treasurer's office and on the computer as electronic files.

4. Who is responsible for this central file?

Treasurer

5. Does the central file include

- The grant proposal? Yes
- The award letter? Yes
- The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? Yes
- Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? Yes
- The work plan? Yes
- Any/all payment requests (invoices)? Yes
- Any/all signed subcontracts? Yes
- Any/all Progress Reports? Yes

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment?

Yes

2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately?

Yes

3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner?

Yes

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CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors?

Yes

2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate?

Yes

3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation?

Yes

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time?

N/A Birthright does not pay employees.

2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant?

N/A

3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding: N/A

- Payroll?

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- Travel?
- Overtime?
- Timesheets?
- Taxes?
- Purchasing?
- Compensated time off?

4. Are employees time sheets approved? N/A

By whom (what position)?

By the Executive Director?

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee? N/A

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? N/A

Additional Comments:

Birthright has a charter with the national organization that does not allow payment for staff salaries. Several subcontractors provide staffing for the Center.

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started?
Birthright opened an office in Alexandria in 1978 to help pregnant women in need. It originally opened as a telephone crisis help line for women in crisis pregnancies.
- What need does your program fulfill?
We attempt to effect a decrease in abortions by offering alternatives to abortion; we have a center where women can receive material help; we help women mobilize their own resources and those of the community; we try to create a societal awareness of the needs of pregnant women.
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning?
We have expanded the basic concept of a pregnant woman's "needs." We used to provide only clothing, diapers, advice, and referrals. We continue to do this, but have now included a wider range of opportunities for education, expanded postpartum help, added life coaching, and are becoming more recognized in the community as a partner in removing barriers faced by this segment of the population. We are reaching out to people who do not speak English through the use of interpreters.

Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve? **Pregnant women and women or families parenting infants**
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? **Our services are not restricted by geographical boundaries, but typically we serve women in a seven county region of central Minnesota.**
- Review recent Demographic reporting. **First-time clients from July-Sept. 2016**
Age: 15-17 (5%); 18-19 (6%); 20-24 (17%); 25-29 (32%); 30-34 (20%); 35+ (2%)
Marital Status: Married (32%); Unmarried (65%); Unknown (3%)
Race: White (88%); African American (3%); Asian Pacific (2%); Multi- (6%); Unknown (1%)
Hispanic Ethnicity (3%) ; Non-Hispanic Ethnicity (97%)
Child Relationship: Mother (92%); Father (2%); Grandparent (6%)
Pregnancy Status of Mother: 1st Trimester (2%); 2nd Trimester (8%); 3rd Trimester (57%)
Postpartum (33%)

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Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they?
 - a. **Bob Carter—business community**
 - b. **Julie Desautels—Church of St. Mary**
 - c. **Patti Eckhoff—educational community**
 - d. **Tammy Lenz—Birthright executive director**
 - e. **Chris Wieberdink—New Covenant Church**
 - f. **Eileen Anderson—business community**
 - g. **Suzanne Sudmeier—Certified Nurse Midwife**
 - h. **Ashley Lenz—medical community**
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges?

The board meets a minimum of four times a year. The board meets beyond that as necessary. The board uses a "dashboard" format to keep informed of Birthright's needs and programming.
- How supportive is the Board of the program? **The board is extremely supportive**
- How is the program staffed? **Birthright is staffed by volunteers. We contract with individuals to perform some grant-related activities**
- Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff? **Grant staff reports to board.**
 - How are staff evaluated on their performance? **Quarterly reports at board meeting**
 - How long have PA staff been employed there? **PA staff as subcontractors have been at Birthright since before there was a Positive Alternative grant available.**
 - How are staff background checks done? **We do not do background checks at this point. MDH suggests that the Center use background checks as part of their policy for all staff, volunteer or subcontracted.**
 - What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? **Any complaint is brought to the attention of the director, who then discusses serious matters with the board. MDH suggests that the Center have a formal policy written for the procedure on client or staffing complaints.**

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Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? **Yes**
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? **Yes**
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? **No**
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? **Not for this new grant cycle**
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed. **Birthright of Alexandria does have an elevated medium risk. This is due to the percentage of funding received by the Positive Alternative Funding as compared to the Center's overall budget. This elevated risk requires closer monitoring of their grant by MDH.**

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? **Most often by word of mouth, however Public Health workers refer many people to us.**
- Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? **We hear quite often that people don't know what Birthright does. We are one of those groups that exist on the fringe of most people's experiences. We have been attending community meetings, such as United Way and a professional business women group to increase our visibility.**
- What is your most common referral source? **Family and friends, along with public health**
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? **No challenges with partners, but we are troubled that the social services director will not let us put our literature in the social services offices. Public health welcomes us, but not social services.**

Work Plan

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.
- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

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Cribs and Car Seats: The numbers have remained consistent. It is possible that we may see a small uptick in crib numbers from outlying counties due to our discontinuing crib vouchers and directly shipping the equipment to clients' homes.

Layettes: The numbers remain consistent

Parent Education: The numbers remain consistent.

Interpreters: This is a new program and we are currently in the process of securing contracts. We expect to have this in place by the end of the year.

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? **No**

Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action?

We advertise on bus benches and on a bus. We have an outreach coordinator who is working with our promotions coordinator to increase community awareness about our services, recruit volunteers, and seek financial support

- What is working well?

Being visible in the community has worked very well. Taking an active role in community organizations has made a difference in how we are perceived

- What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients?

If a client needs material help, we are not hard to find. What we do find challenging is attracting abortion-minded women. We want to reach women of all socio-economic and educational levels, not just those perceived by the community as "needing help."

Data:

- How is program data collected and by whom?

All volunteers collect data with intake forms. Public health nurses who do safe sleep education also collect data for us. The data we collect is useful.

- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection?

Through the years the collection process has been clarified, and that has helped a lot.

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are

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planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation? **This grantee presented their 2015-2016 Evaluation Report as an example of a well-organized project to the 2016 fall grantee north regional meeting. This report and project was well received at the meeting.**

The grantee's 2016-17 project will continue to evaluate their car seat safety program to gain more heightened insight on improving their successful programming.

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share? **Not at this time.**
- Anything else we haven't asked? **No.**

What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?
-I know it varies by county/city, but housing is a big issue. What roles do agencies such as CEP, HUD, etc. play? I think there are other agencies as well. We need better understanding of programs like Section 8 and low-income housing.
-We are totally confused by Minnesota programs and how they help families. MFIP, child care, SNAP—these are so tangled that we always just send people to social services for help. But we SHOULD have a better grasp on these programs, especially as they touch on the Necessary Services
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
We are very, very grateful for this grant and have seen how it helps a lot of women
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program? **I am interested in hearing about how people have (in general) challenged this program at the state level. What are their objections and concerns? We can indirectly address these, if we know of them, with our partners.**

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Summary:

Birthright of Alexandria has been a long time Positive Alternative grantee who has offered material assistance along with pregnancy and parenting education to their clients. With the help of the Positive Alternatives grant this grantee has been able to expand their reach and depth of assistance to women in unwanted or crisis pregnancy situations. The Center now offer pregnancy and parenting education along with life skills education. Having been organized since 1978 has enabled this Center to create partnerships and work with many key organizations in the area that can be used as warm referrals for their clients. New this grant cycle the Center will be enlisting the help of an interpreter for the needs of non-English speaking clients.

During the site visit it was recognized that the Center does not routinely require background checks for its volunteers or staff. It was highly recommended that the grantee look into and write a policy to initiate and promote this practice. Another area discussed was the topic of board development. The center would appreciate help and direction on this important topic. Outreach was also discussed with the thought of increasing awareness for the Center in the greater Alexandria area. One idea discussed was Facebook ads. Housing provisions for those in need continues to be an area where there are few options in the Alexandria area. Cradle of Hope's rental assistance was mentioned as part of a possible solution. Although Birthright has comfortable working relationships with the local United Way and WIC, it has been a challenge for this grantee to work with the area social services department as a referral source. This grantee mentioned that they would like more information on understanding the basic opportunities available for referral on basic needs for their clients in the area.

Overall Birthright has been a responsible and organized Positive Alternative grantee. I look forward to our continuing partnership with the Positive Alternative Grant program.

Date: October 31, 2016

Grant Manager: Mary Ottman